

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK

DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK CONFERENCE CALL
July 3, 2007 10:00 A.M.
HELENA, MONTANA

July 3, 2007

Department of Livestock Board Room

Call To Order

Chairman Bill Hedstrom called the meeting to order at 10:10 a. m.

Attendance:

Board of Livestock

Bill Hedstrom, Linda Nielsen, Janice French, George Hammond, Rebecca Weed, and Stan Boone. Meg Smith was an excused absence.

Department Personnel

Christian Mackay, Executive Officer; George Harris, Centralized Services Administrator; Dr. Jeanne Rankin, Acting State Veterinarian, Animal Health; Clyde Huseby, Animal Health; and Sherry Rust, Executive Secretary.

Public

Ariel Overstreet, Agri News (in person); phone in: John Hilbert, Miles City Star; Jackie Yamanaka, Yellowstone Public Radio; Marty Malone, Park County Extension; Scott McMillan, Bozeman Chronicle; Roddy Taylor, 2nd VP MSGA; Errol Rice, MSGA; Sarah Cook, AP; Jennifer Sanchez, Senator John Testor's office; Bruce Malcom, producer, Emigrant; Jeremy Seidlitz, MCA; Kim Baker, MCA, Kathy Kasmier, MT Farmers Union; Jay Bodner, MSGA; Eileen Rose, Budget office; Russell Nimitz, Northern Ag Network; Ron Zeller, Department of Ag; Shelly Hicks.

Update on brucellosis outbreak

Christian Mackay began the meeting with an update stating there is much work to do by the end of July. They are well into the investigation with contact testing complete while testing of trace-out animals is ongoing. The investigation began with the first cow found with brucellosis after sale in Baker and has centered around the index herd in Bridger (where the animal was sold from) and the birth herd in Emigrant. Tests on the index herd indicated six more positive cows. Testing on the Emigrant (birth herd) on two occasions were negative for brucellosis.

Dr. Rankin said APHIS will review the ongoing investigation on July 17th and may suggest possible changes in management. She continued that the outlook looks good with over 2500 cattle tested and pending results.

Christian noted that at this time only two states have put testing restrictions on Montana. Those being North Dakota and Kansas, on cattle within a 20 mile radius of the index herd. Other states may be awaiting the final report.

Update on epidemiological investigation

Dr. Rankin explained the epidemiology process. Upon discovery in the index herd, the Emigrant herd, follow up and testing is required of contact herds and two years back with any animals sold. This includes the index herd, the birth herd, and fence line contacts around both herds. Estimated numbers are approximately 15 herds and around 2,500 head total. The

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Bridger area index herd and fenceline contacts, also herds which purchased contact animals are included in the testing process.

Dr. Rankin explained that brucellosis (brucella abortus) is an organism that can hide within the body and can survive in cattle for up to six years and never show up in the bloodstream. Often the organism does not show up except a reproductive cycle or stress event such as calving.

Source

Dr. Rankin explained that there is no definitive source for this outbreak although the USDA lab in Ames Iowa is doing DNA "hoof printing" of the organism by comparing brucella organism found in the index cow to elk and other known sources from around Yellowstone National Park. It is possible that a source may never be identified. As of now there is no bovine source for it from tracing and linking it to other states or areas.

Outlook for maintaining Class Free status

Dr. Rankin continued that the department is feeling very positive about the outcome of the investigation. A final report is due by July 17, 60 days from the initial positive test. The department must have a complete report in to USDA APHIS by the 17th for full review. If the report is acceptable to USDA Montana maintains its brucellosis class-free status conditional on no other brucellosis positives in the next two years. Dr. Rankin said that part of the USDA APHIS protocol is that the Bridger herd (positive herd) must be depopulated by the July 17th deadline of the state will lose class-free status.. USDA APHIS is currently negotiating indemnity with the Morgans. DOL only has two weeks left (from Monday) to complete USDA APHIS requirement deadline. There are 301 cows and approximately 300 calves plus 16 bulls in the index herd. Shipping of the diseased herd will be handled by USDA, they are in charge of that process. DOL's goal is to retain the brucellosis free status for the state.

She continued that future plans include looking over DOL's ARM to strengthen rules as Wyoming and Idaho had to do following their incidents. Any potential changes will be brought before the board.

Board members expressed concern with the looming deadline and when moving the herd should start, trucks in place, and the fact that USDA is responsible for shipping the herd.

Dr. Rankin stated USDA in Montana, Dr. Knight, is very concerned with coming to an agreement to facilitate the move. They are aware of the timeline and deadlines.

Mr. Mackay suggested the department shoot for the 11th of July to have a report to the board at which time the board will review progress and plan from there.

Adjournment

Chairman Bill Hedstrom adjourned the meeting at .10:39 a.m.

BILL HEDSTROM, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF LIVESTOCK